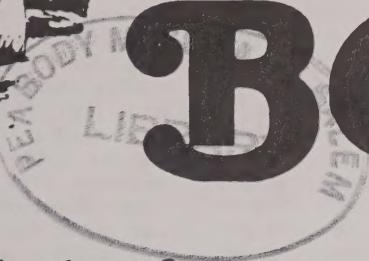


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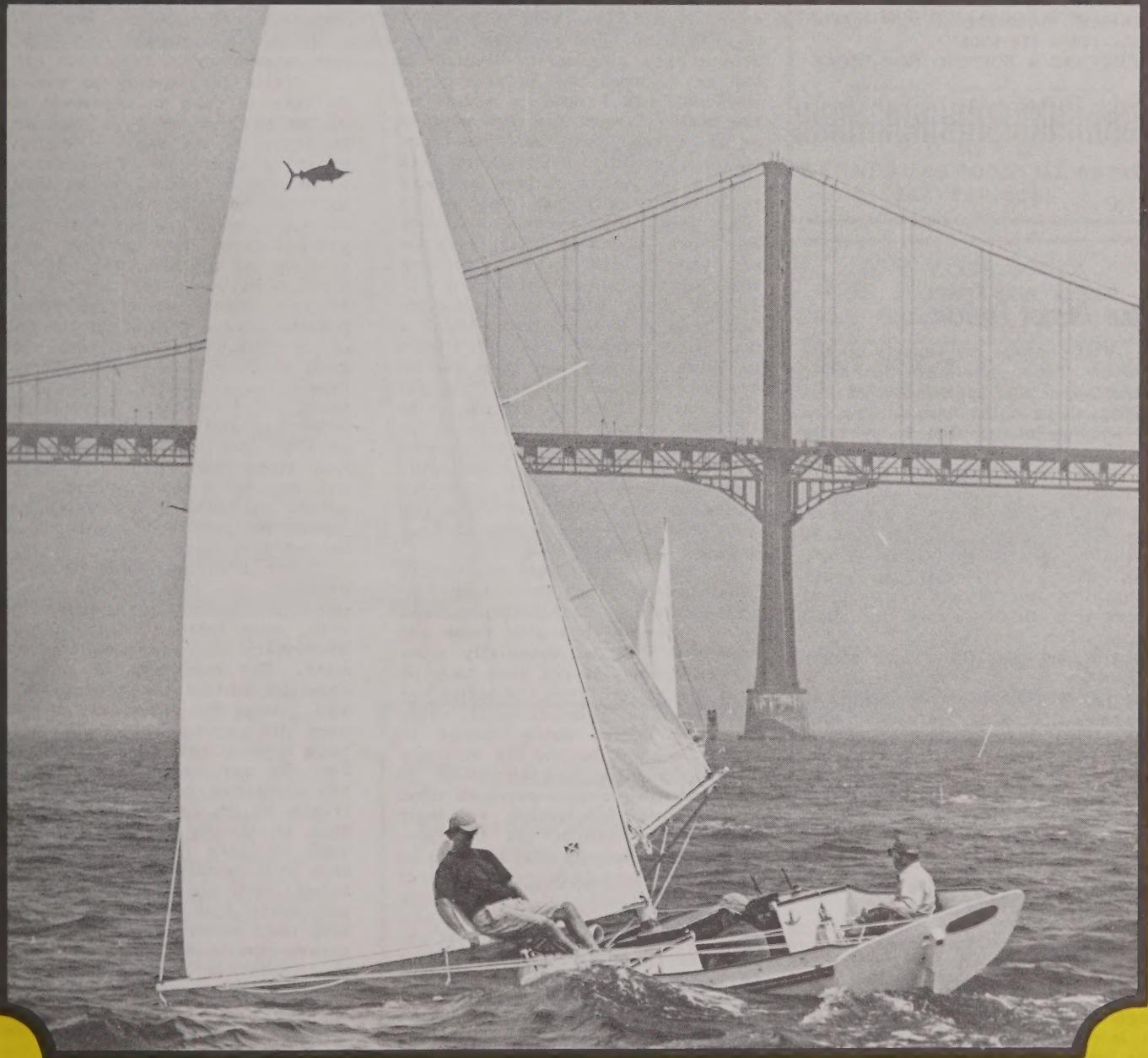


# messing about in **BOATS**



Volume 9 - Number 12

November 1, 1991





## messing about in BOATS

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR: BOB HICKS



### Our Next Issue...

Will include my reports on the October TSCA meet at Rockport, Maine, and the appearance of the Viking ships right here at our local Misery Island. Jim Lacey tells of sailing an "Oldshoe" at Key Largo, and T. Ole Phinn's chronicle "Titusville Follies, is all about paddling Florida waters. And Tom should be back with installment #4 of the "Flight of the Damn Foole". John Wilson will tell us about "Finishing out Whisp" (a project report that didn't make it into this issue); Dan Marcus gives us his thoughts on painting wooden boats; and Larry Sedgwick reports on his building a one-hole baidarka. Two designs will be featured; Phil Bolger's 31' cruising multihull and Chris Kulczyski's compound curved plywood kayaks. Hugh Ware reviews a video, "75 Years of San Francisco Ferryboats", and if more is needed we've got it.

### On the Cover...

Lennie Lipton catches the spirit of the occasion at the 75th Anniversary Herreshoff Fish Class Regatta at Bristol, Rhode Island, in late summer. Full coverage in this issue.

# Commentary

BOB  
HICKS

The 1991 on-the-water season has just about concluded as I write this in mid-October, and for me anyway it'll be back indoors for the next several months, hopefully some of that time in the shop to work on those projects left abandoned last spring when the onrush of events to go to almost every weekend engulfed us. I don't mind the switch over as I enjoy shop time as much as on-the-water time. Both suffer from the intrusion of the real world demands we all face, things like taking care of where we live so it'll survive another year, keeping the motor vehicles reasonably reliable for those weekend event travels, and, of course, doing this magazine up, my equivalent of a job.

I do get to a lot of boating events, and yet most that take place are not amongst them, as my choices are necessarily limited to one or at most two on any given weekend, and I tend to decide on the basis of what I really want to go to myself first, and newsworthiness second. Also figuring into this is the matter of how far away they might be. Last summer we made three trips over into upstate New York, which is a long trip for us, about 5 to 7 hours driving time. Going down to Maine is a 2 to 4 hour trip, going to Mystic or Cape Cod a 2 hour trip. These I don't find tedious. It's when I have to drive all day, and then get up next morning and drive further yet that I balk. Even an all day 10 to 12 hour drive, such as would be required to go to the Chesapeake from here, is viewed as a chore. I've been driving too long, and for years in the '60's and '70's did many, many of those 10 to 15 hour days behind the wheel.

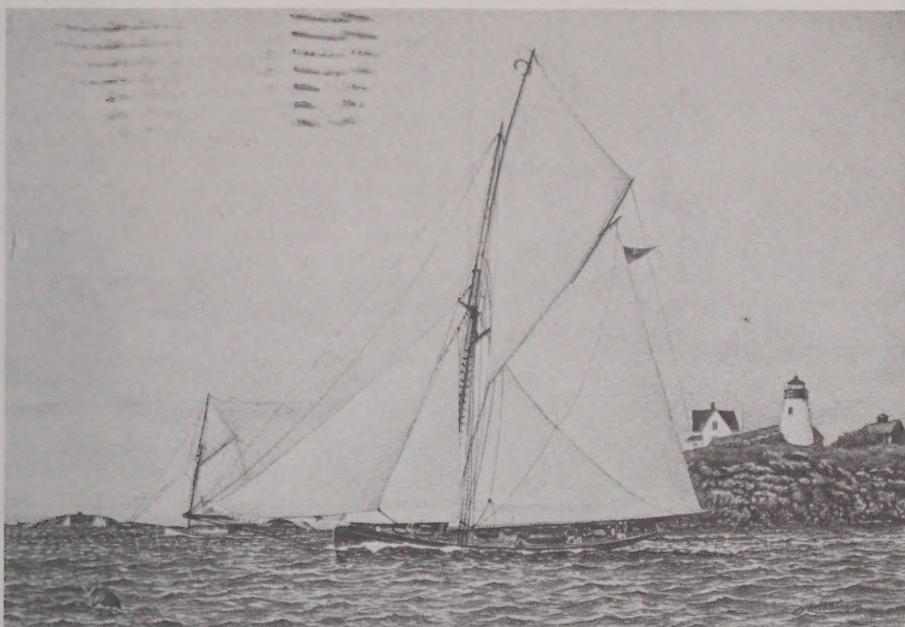
I do go to all that I attend as "business trips", and report on what transpires that I think might be of interest. But also these are recreation for us, especially when I participate and not just look on as a journalist. Even the latter events can be recreation, I enjoy watching others doing things in boats that are beyond my ordinary skills. I think that a variety of small boating events reported upon bring some inspiration to many readers who cannot get to them. And at most events the boats to be seen, and sometimes tried, are of obvious interest, and the people who designed, built, and/or own them bring that human interest aspect that is vital to messing about in boats. I am not a techie interested only in the boats themselves, but view the boats often as extensions of their creators, usually interesting people.

There are events further away that exert a strong appeal to me. I'd have liked to have been at St. Michael's, Maryland, in October for the small craft meet there; or at Cedar Key last May cruising those placid tropical waters with fellow small boaters; or attended a Mid-Atlantic sea kayak symposium. I'd like to be able to visit readers who have sent in stories about places and events where they live and join them on their outings. Time and money do not permit this luxury. When I'm away nothing happens here at the "office", and long distance travel is just too costly for the still struggling budget balance here. First priority is to keep "Boats" going and that means the time and money are most heavily invested here at home, and the trips to events are constrained to reachable distances and affordable expenses.

While the variety of events I do take in tend to represent some of the various ways to mess about in boats, I do want to bring in other geographical locations and their unique aspects. These come to us from readers motivated enough to write about, and often photograph, those events they attend that appeal to them. I cannot "assign" a writer/photographer to cover any event, as no payment is possible, so I depend on the input of readers. We have had pretty good coverage from places far away from Massachusetts, thanks to them. They do this because they enjoy it, and want their own events to get noticed, and also to help along the magazine in its role now as pretty much the only periodical interested in affordable small boats and the people who are involved with them.

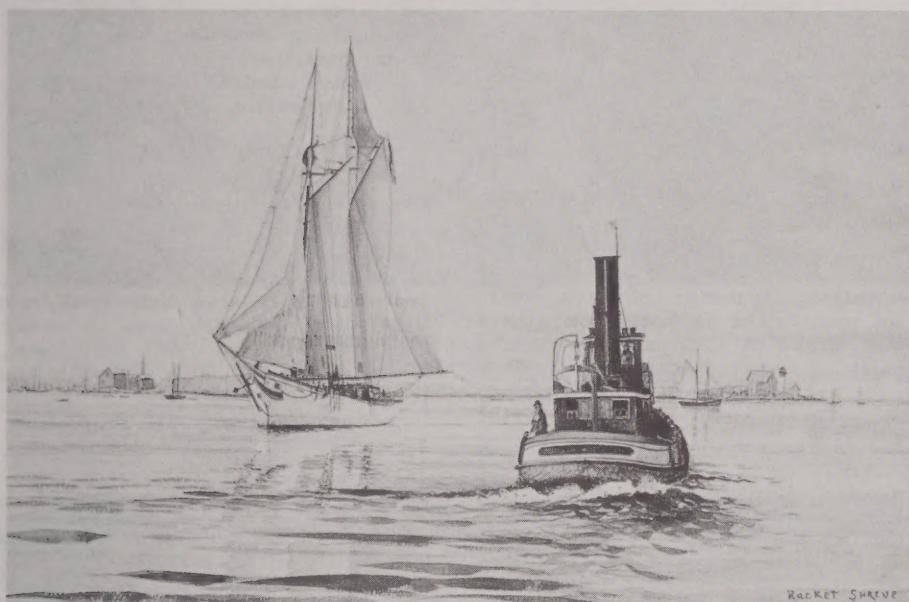
For 1992 I'm going to try to broaden my own involvement at participating in on-the-water events, some further afield than I've undertaken this past couple of summers. The calendars of activities come in during the winter months and I have time then also to look over the prospects. I do solicit your suggestions of events that you feel fit our sort of viewpoint on the pleasures of boating. I'm unlikely to go further to get there than an all-day trip overland, and very unlikely to fly anywhere, so this still restricts my geographical range. Still you never know, maybe prosperity will arrive at our doorstep next season. Not an impossible dream, for in the face of the current economic decline, "Boats" is doing better than ever, thanks to all of you who believe in the magazine.

# Marine Art Exhibition



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## BOREDOM THE PROBLEM?

After ten years of attending all kinds of small boatbuilder shows I've frankly seen some things too many times. Perversely, the quality of most small boatbuilders' work may be working against them; I've just seen too many beautifully executed Whitehalls, for example, to go too far out of my way to see one more. Show after show I see the same dozen or so standard models that tend to pop up. It's still fun to talk to people, but I think that show organizers need to come up with something new to offer to make the faithful continue to attend. Unpleasant though it might seem, I think that boredom may be the problem.

The show which I'm most likely to continue to make a "must see" in the future is the Maine Boatbuilders' Show. The site itself always has lots of interesting boats in storage, the Sandbagger on display last March was unique, and the atmosphere of the place is great. But even this could get stale after a while if there aren't enough new things to see. And perhaps more "hands-on" activities and talks are the answer, they seem to work well at Mystic and the L.L. Bean events. I think having a show of traditional small craft at the same time would also be worthwhile, along with a marine flea market.

Anrew Updegrove, Marblehead, MA.

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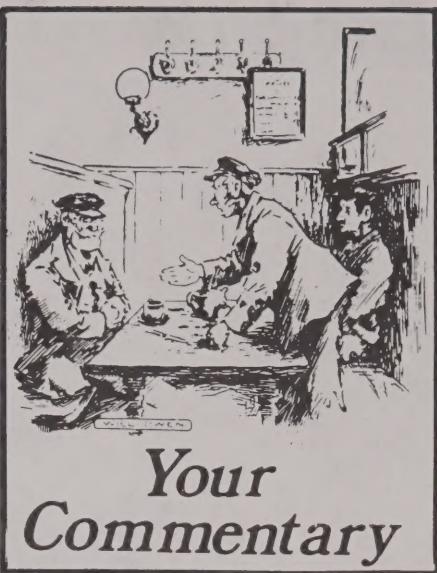
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## Your Commentary

## LOOKING FOR PADDLING PARTNERS

I am looking for a paddling partner (or partners), preferably a woman or married couple, to join me on a two-week photography expedition to Costa Rica canals in March '92 or '93. You must be quiet, pleasant, adventuresome, in excellent health, and enjoy primitive jungle camping. My main purpose is to photograph monkeys, water birds and other wildlife, and native homes along the canals. It will be about a 60 to 100 mile trip and we will use inflatable kayaks that pack as luggage, and carry all our food and gear. If you are this person or persons call me at (203) 242-9953 evenings or (203) 273-7285 days.

Marge Nichols, 555 Main St., Newington, CT 06111.

## HOW TO FIND LAUNCH RAMPS?

I've been wondering about launch ramps. How does one find them? If someone from your area vacationed in my area and wanted to sail out around the Statue of Liberty, where would he launch his boat? Does anyone know of sources for such information along our Atlantic coastline?

John Smith, 194 Greylock Pkwy, Belleville, NJ 07109.

## GOTTA GO WITH THE FLOW

I sallied forth to Humarock, Massachusetts last summer for Crawford Boatbuilding's "Regatta", a great time was had by all and even your weather cooperated. So I just had to order a Melonseed from Roger for use back here in sunny (soggy) Florida. As they say, "Sometimes you gotta go with the flow."

Phred Palmer, St. Augustine, FL

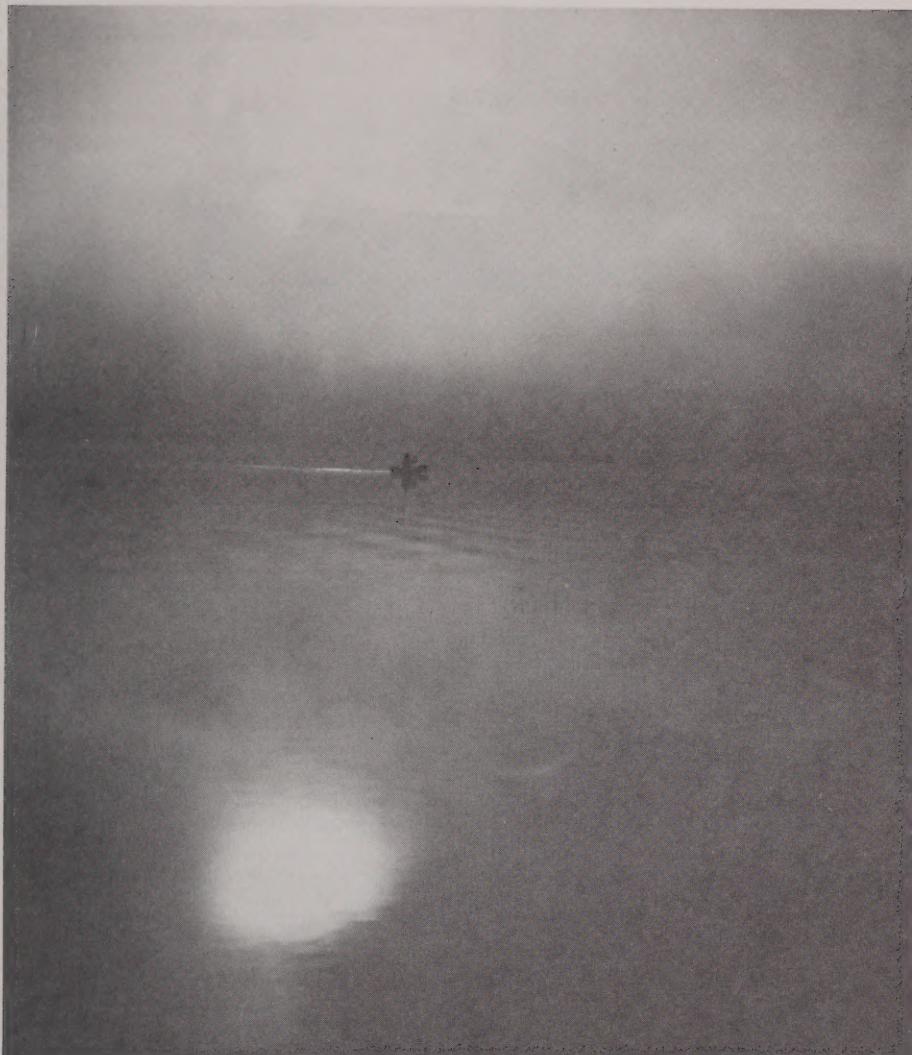


## BOATING FOR UNDER \$100

My first boat building effort, this Bolger designed "Tortoise" which my kid named "Swamp Cat", was launched in August. This little boat best signifies to me that in these financially tough times a

person who truly loves boats and being out on the water can indulge for very little money. In my case it was under \$100 including a fiberglass bottom.

Jesse Figgins, Seattle, WA



#### LABOR DAY

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#### "SHANTYBOAT" AVAILABLE

We see that Harlan Hubbard's "Shantyboat" ("Boats", July 1, 1991) is listed in the latest International Marine Books catalog. Too bad this didn't happen a few years ago when he was still alive. We visited him in Payne Hollow. He supported himself by selling his really fine paintings of local scenes and had quite a reputation in the area. He relished the extra time that became available to him as he slowed down with age because at last he could devote himself to his beloved painting. When we visited him he was still going strong at 89 years of age.

David & Anne, Key Largo, FL.

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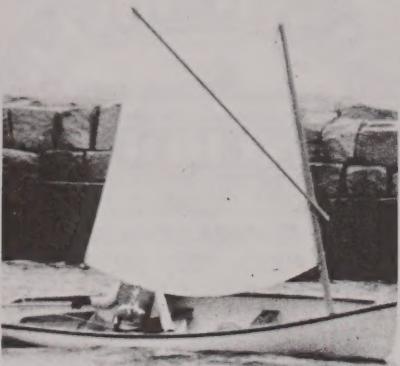
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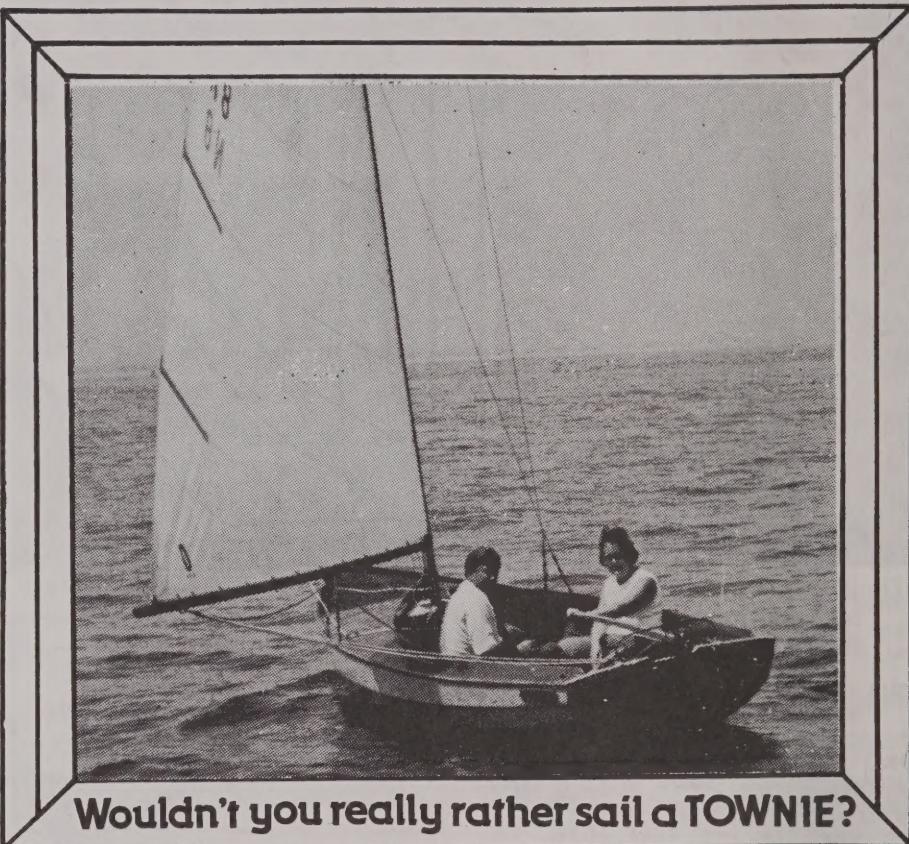
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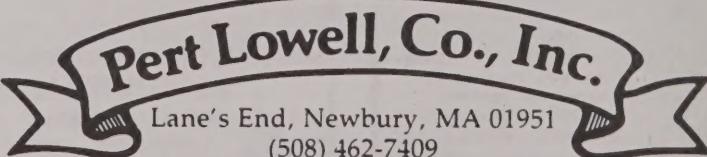
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# The 75th Anniversary Fish Class Celebration

Lennie Lipton

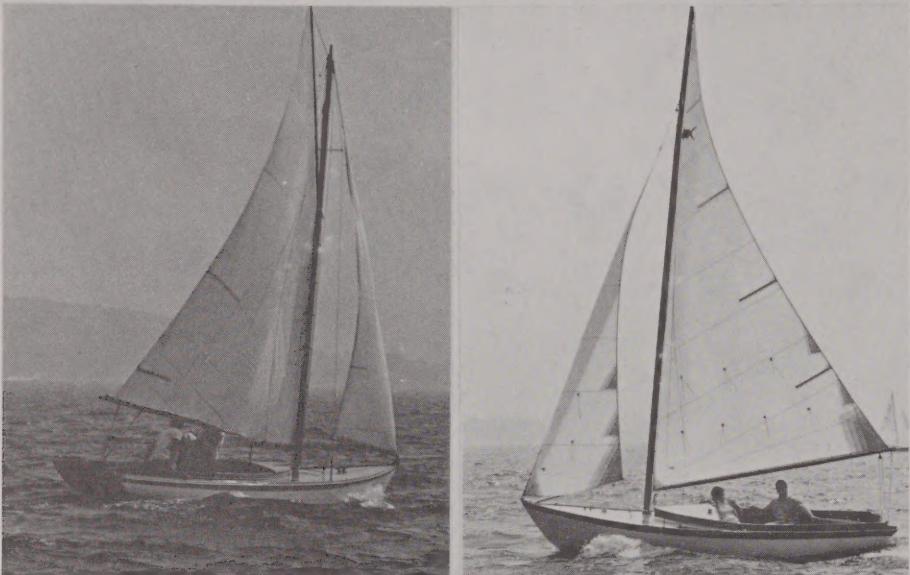
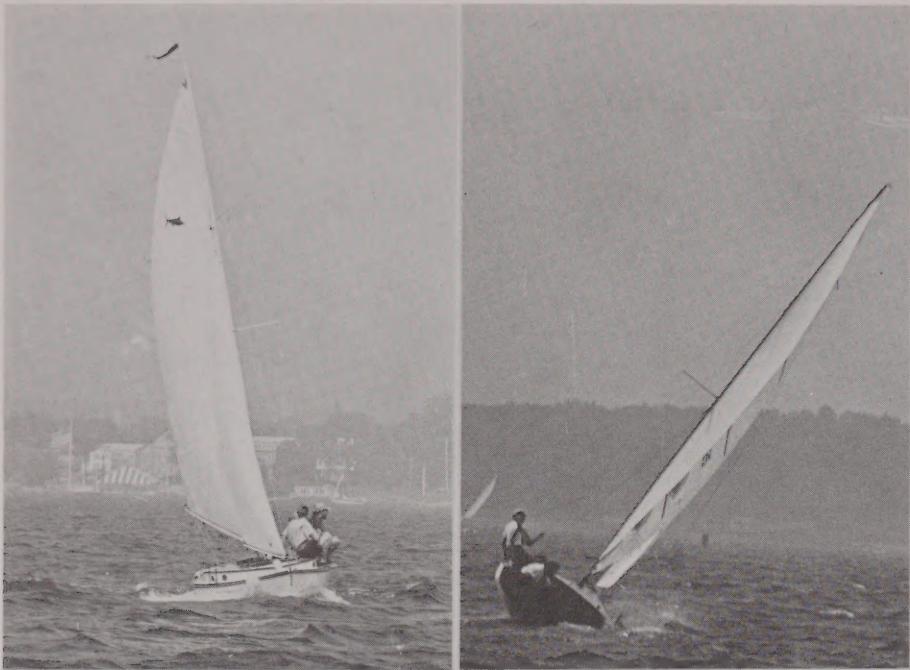
The Herreshoff Museum in Bristol, RI is a wonderful place. It is full of Herreshoff creations, some restored to perfection, some in the condition in which they were discovered. Last year the museum sponsored a gathering/regatta of big boats- this year, spurred by the fact that is is an anniversary year for a fine class of boats they concentrated on three one-designs. The gathering took place on Aug. 17 & 18. Rick Meyer, owner of Teacup, is the real organizer of the Fish Class these days. The Museum gives him a lot of credit for tracking down boats, owners, and histories of the boats and getting everyone together.

The Fish class, and its modern fiberglass replica, the Petrel, were the headliners of this year's production. Also included were the Marlins, which were Fish fitted with a little bigger cabin to make a pocket cruiser. They had the same rig and hull, though. (The modern Marlin, by Cape Cod shipbuilding, had the hull altered slightly). Two other very significant one designs were present also- S boats from the area were out in force-thirteen were registered!(there is another fleet in Western Long Island Sound) and the "12 1/2's" were out too. These lovely little boats are familiar to many of you as "Doughdishes" and also are known as "Buzzard's Bay Boys' Boats" (their original designation) and "Bullseyes".

A significant event this year co-sponsored by the Museum and the "12 1/2 Association" was the first junior event for 12 1/2's in many a year. This was lovely to see as the boats were originally designed for the young sailors of the day.



Right from the top: Start of the first race Saturday. "Dervish" and "Sea Robin" on a windward leg. Nick Long running into Bristol harbor in "Sea Robin" for 2nd place. Alfred Bissett's launch for "Corsair".



Across the top: "Dervish" reaching with a bone in her teeth. Hard on the wind. Across the middle: A gaff rigged Fish going to windward. Steve and Kim Clark were overall winners in "Mischief". Across the bottom: Mike Pesaro and Halsey Herreshoff of the Herreshoff Museum put the event together.



The larger designs such as the Fish were in response to adults requesting a similar boat in a slightly larger size. Mike Pesaro, associate director of the museum, is also Fleet Captain of the 12 1/2 Assoc., and had a lot to do with setting up the Junior race.

#### HISTORY OF THE BOATS

The Fish were first built in 1916 with an order of 23 for the Seawanake Corinthian Y.C. of Oyster Bay, NY. This was a common way for one-designs to be conceived in those days. These boats were gaff rigged. The fleet eventually numbered 26, and all were named for species of fish. Later, in 1925-6 boats were built for the Warwick Country Club to add nine to the fleet, and a couple of others were built here and there, for an eventual total of about 40. It is interesting to note that over half of the original boats are in existence and still sailing today. For the regatta about one quarter of the original fleet came, supplemented by several Petrels.

As an interesting aside, each boat as manufactured by Herreshoff Mfg. Co. came with a Herreshoff-designed anchor. One of the S Class owners borrowed an anchor that was being donated to the museum and had casting patterns made. He had a new anchor cast in bronze (only the small sizes were bronze) and had his shiny new anchor at the skippers' meeting. What a beautiful piece of work the original design was, and still is!

There were several boats among the many beautifully maintained or restored boats that are worth mentioning. I'll first mention a powerboat! Alfred Bissett owns the launch from the yacht *Corsair*. This a an elegant little yaacht herself, and graced the race course with her presence. Al, from Connecticut, had her up in the Bristol area for the summer.

*Mischief*, the winner for the weekend, was rebuilt by Stuart Levi of Cape Cod. Stuart had owned a 12 1/2 and was delighted to find a Fish needing restoration. Stuart finally decided to rebuild using the WEST system and use the hardware and rig. Unfortunately, he would have had to use a motor on the boat, so he decided to sell it rather than hang an outboard on it. The Clarks clearly enjoy this lovely boat. Stuart donated the original HMC. builder's plaque to the museum.

Ray Warner sailed his beautiful dark green gaff boat *Pompano* in the regatta. She is unusual in having a flush deck

and a self bailing cockpit. Ray explained that a retired sea captain had converted her for a single handed trip to the Bahamas and Ray left her in that configuration.

Finally, for a little wrinkle on appearance a bit different from the "Bristol" appearance of most of the boats was Geoff Warner's *Dervish*, restored in Maine and given that "Down East" look with her white cabin sides and coamings. She was also the only Marlin in the group.

#### CELEBRATION WEEKEND

The weekend's activities consisted of racing Saturday and Sunday with a New England clambake Saturday night, accompanied by introductions of owners and short commentaries on their particular boats' histories. The museum was open extended hours from Friday night for early arrivals.

#### THE TRIP UP; THE MUSEUM

I left my home port of Mamaroneck, NY several days before the celebration for a rather windless trip up to Bristol. The only real sail on the way up was from beautiful Potter's Cove on Prudence Is. to Bristol Friday morning, a distance of a couple of miles. I spent the afternoon in the museum, which is developing more each year. It began some years ago in one small building and was staffed by family and friends. Recently, it moved to a very large building on the same street which enable the museum to move its collection indoors, except for one or two boats. The whole "neighborhood" there was at one time the Herreshoff Manufacturing Co. yard. Some stone piers and marine railway segments still remain from the days of great boatbuilding there. The museum is worth a visit by boat or car, and is open most afternoons—call (401) 253-5000 for information.

#### THE RACES

Both Saturday and Sunday were beautiful sailing days—brisk southwest breezes were present and made for exciting sailing. There were two races Saturday with a short break in between. The S boats sailed one race of 12.3 miles, the Fish sailed two of 6.3, and the 12 1/2's sailed two of about the same distance. It always amazes me that boats of such age can be so well maintained and remain so competitive. The sailing was lively, the boats were sailed well, and competition was keen. The photo opportunity I missed was a "photo finish" among three Fish which was spectacular.

Nevertheless, I got lots of good photos of the boats on all points of sail. I motored to windward in order to have the maneuverability I wanted but on the reaching and running legs I sailed with the furling genoa rolled out. This enabled me to switch back to motoring easily if I needed to. The 16' waterline Fish (20' 9" overall) were doing an honest 6.7 to 7 knots on the reach, and 5.5 to 6 on the run, depending on the wind strength! This just happened to match the speed of my 33' sloop under jenny alone. That's moving!

Sunday there may have been a bit more wind. The race committee prudently decided on a course more confined to the harbor for the 12 1/2's and a longer one with a similar twist for the Fish. There was a long beat to a buoy off Prudence Island, same as Saturday, but then a run into the harbor and another beat on the East side of Hog Island, followed by another run to the finish. They had all the finishes off the dock so land-bound spectators could see well. The S boats again raced a longer course.

#### SAILING ON *DERVISH*

We had the good fortune on Sunday of being asked if we wanted to crew on *Dervish*, Geoff Warner's boat. It took maybe a half a second to decide. Paul Burke, a catboat sailor from Wickford, had crewed with Geoff on Saturday and was aboard, but two other crew hadn't been able to make it. Their loss was definitely our gain.

Geoff wisely decided on a "Blue Fish" leads "Shark" and "Dervish" on a reaching leg.

reef for the main with the feeling that we could shake it out if we felt we didn't need it. Some of the boats didn't reef, but it seemed that the speed worked out about the same, even downwind. Geoff got consistently good starts throughout the series, and got the best start on Sunday. It was nice being out front— for a while. Eventually Halsey Herreshoff passed us, as did Steve Clark in *Mischief*. We eventually finished in third place. We did plenty of hiking out and really enjoyed the race. Paul and Geoff clearly enjoy racing and worked well as a team together. It was a fast race, finishing early in the afternoon. At that time we sailed to a mooring at the Bristol Y.C. and we heard a very different weather forecast than had been on earlier that day. My priorities went to finding a safe place for my boat during the approaching hurricane so I missed the closing festivities.

#### OVERALL STANDINGS

##### FISH:

1. *Mischief*- Steve & Kim Clark
2. *Blue Fish*- Milton Merl
3. *Sea Robin*- Nick Long/Jaan Whitehead
4. *Dervish*- Geoff Warner

##### S Class:

1. *Osprey*- Michael McCaffrey
2. *Lady Luck*- Peter Hallock
3. *Arguement*- Scott Manchester

12 1/2 Class

1. *Nut Hatch*- Jonathan Goff
2. *Pooka*- Angus Davis
3. *Shrimp*- Matthew Kane





Frank Samuelson, mate (at bow) and George Harbo, skipper, aboard "The Fox"

In 1896, New York City editor and publisher Richard H. Fox could rightly boast that his National Police Gazette was "The foremost sporting and sensational weekly of the day." Contained within its gaudy pink pages were endless suicides, drownings, elopements, adulterers and peeping Toms. Handsome woodcuts lavishly illustrated exciting headlines: "The Judge was a kisser," "Too fond of the ladies," "Curves which men have travelled many miles to see." Utterly chauvinistic, The Gazette depicted women as busty, half-dressed objects of casual pleasure.

Ladies were by no means the only source of sport. Mr. Fox's paper was attuned to any kind of gambler, occasional or obsessive. Sculling, football, shooting, running, skiing, horses, wrestling and boxing were all elaborately promoted. At the time of his death, it was estimated that Fox had offered medals, trophies and prizes in excess of \$1,000,000. The Police Gazette was ambitious, lively, vulgar and with a recently opened branch in London's Fleet Street to prove it, highly successful.

One of Richard Fox's many promotions in 1896 was a \$10,000 prize to the first men to row across the Atlantic Ocean without sail or motor: immediately

## IN 1896 A NY PUBLISHER OFFERED \$10,000 TO THE FIRST MEN TO ROW ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN WITHOUT SAIL OR MOTOR...

By W. P. Henning

Reprinted courtesy of the "Two River Times" of Red Bank, New Jersey.

accepting his challenge were two young immigrants from Norway, Frank Samuelson, 27, and George Harbo, 31, both of whom had emigrated as teenagers from the small fishing village of Farsund. The sea had been in their Nordic blood for generations, and they had settled in Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey to work as fishermen

and clammers.

Samuelson, a bachelor, was 6'2" with legendary blue eyes and a reputation for great strength. Harbo, married, was short, stocky, and strong. He had studied navigation and owned a pilot's license. Certainly these men were less grand than the imposing Richard Fox, yet their modest

lives could disguise an ambition at least as fierce and determined. Fox recognized at once their resolve, and became the sponsor of their enterprise. With this welcome backing, Harbo and Samuelson commissioned William Seaman of Long Branch, N.J. to build a double-ended skiff, and christened it "The Fox," in honor of their benefactor.

The boat they chose to brave the North Atlantic was a variation of the Sea Bright skiff, a proven fishing vessel of local waters. Seaman and his team constructed an 18-foot 4-inch long boat with a 5-foot beam. The bow and stern were outfitted with airtight compartments which served as dry storage and reserve buoyance. Two special hand rails were fitted on the bottom to help right the boat in case it capsized.

Harbo, estimating that the voyage would take two months, staked his survival on the following equipment and provisions: a 20 gallon water tank, 8 five-gallon cans of Kerosene, 100 pounds of bread, 250 eggs, a compass, a stove, an anchor, cable, 10 pairs of ash oars, and 24 oar locks. "The Fox" was completed at a cost of \$289, three times the cost of the average Seaman skiff. With 3,390 miles of vast and ruthless ocean in front of them, the expense was easily dismissed.

On June 6, 1896, with a crowd of several hundred to cheer and pray for them, Harbo and Samuelson departed from New York's Battery Park.

Harbo, who was designated master, kept the log and rowed in the stern, while Samuelson was mate in the bow position. Their routine was numbing: row for 18 hours, sleep for five and relax for one. Weather would constantly interrupt this schedule. As early as June 12, it was "too cold to sleep." June 14 followed "blowing a gale" and with "heavy seas." From the start, the stove repeatedly malfunctioned and much of their food would be cold and often wet.

The log does not betray any thoughts of fear or monotony. "50 miles — days work," "Day's work — 45 miles," "100 miles today" were the relentless and critical entries.

On the 29th day out, they paused briefly to observe the 4th of July. "This day we celebrated by washing ourselves in soap and fresh water. The first day our faces have seen good, fresh water since leaving New York." Other than this quaint moment of patriotism, the first month of the trip was uneventful and tedious: rowing, bailing and weather.

On Friday, July 10 (the 35th day out), the log entry spoke for itself: "It has been blowing a gale all night. Wind west 8 a.m. Wind increasing 12 noon. Going before it at slow rate. Days work 100 miles. It has been blowing a gale for two days, and the sea is bigger than we have seen it on this trip. At about 8 a.m. a big sea struck us partly sideways upsetting the boat and us in the water.

In a few minutes we got into the boat again. We lost many things this time: floating anchor and cable; frying pan; cookpot and one rattan seat. Everything we have in the boat is soaked with water except for the bread. This is the third night without sleep."

Fortunately, the rowers had fastened lifelines around their waists and were able to grab the handrails on the boat's underside. Exhausted and ill, they somehow were able to continue the journey. Samuelson's sister, Jenny Sorensen, provided the best description of their pathos and peril:

"Their skins were livid and bleeding from the smash," she wrote, "their clothes ripped, and they coughed up vast quantities of water; even their ears and noses dripped it. Only their devotion to finishing the task, any task, before them, pushed them on for the next four days. They rowed mechanically now, sick of the whole thing, seldom talking, hungry and sorely lacking in spirit."

On the fifth day after the capsize and the 40th day out, they were picked up by the Norwegian freighter "Cito" 2,000 miles across the Atlantic with diminishing supplies; it was unlikely that Harbo and Samuelson would have survived much longer. Being rescued by sailors from their mother country was a moment of deliverance they remembered for the rest of their lives. Fed, cleaned-up, and re-provisioned for five weeks, they were much heartened ("We were treated like lords," the rowers noted.).

The "Cito's" captain was careful to give them a letter before

they resumed the voyage. "This is to certify that I met the rowboat "Fox" of New York on this day, July 15, 1896, and that the boat contained no mast, sail or rudder."

Samuelson and Harbo returned to their grueling labours. The weather continued to be rough, but progress was steady. More than one thousand miles of ocean remained ahead of them.

On August 1, after 55 days at sea (20 days after the capsize), Harbo sighted St. Mary's in the Scilly Islands. They had the U.S. consul certify their arrival, and then rowed onto Le Havre, France, where they arrive Friday, August 7. Harbo's last entry in the log reads "Arrived 9:45 and consider our voyage at an end." They had been at sea for 62 days.

The two international celebrities were an appalling sight. Their fingers had curled from holding the oars for so long. Their forearms were swollen grotesquely. Their skin color had become purple. They could hardly walk ... and they could not have cared less. They had won the prize and set a record. Most of all, they had survived. What they wanted now was lots of food and a bed.

Their travels in Europe are a vaguely documented lark. They received medals and some money from King Oscar II of Norway and Sweden. They were also received by his majesty. Fox's Police Gazette minted a medal and secured the \$10,000 prize. After spending Christmas with relatives in Norway, the now-famous rowers prepared to return to their American home.

Their return crossing might have been inspired by Jules Verne. They booked passage on a freighter and stowed the treasured "Fox" aboard. Two-hundred to 250 miles from New York, the ship ran into fierce headwinds and lost steam. Desperate to save his ship, the master ordered that all flammable material be used to fuel a head of steam. Sacrificing the "Fox" was unthinkable. Samuelson and Harbo demanded to be put overboard in gale seas. They rowed the rest of the way back to New Jersey. The image of these two handsome oarsmen emerging from the open sea into Sandy Hook Bay was a "triumphant return" indeed.

Both men resumed their fishing careers on the Jersey Shore. George Harbo died in Atlantic Highlands in 1945 at the age of 78. Frank Samuelson returned to Norway and died at Farsund in 1946 at age 77.

Harbo and Samuelson were two simple fishermen who formed a heroic partnership. They rarely spoke of their adventure. There were no boastful "sagas" of great Vineland resplendence, though there certainly could have been. What they did was quickly forgotten and has now become obscure.

They were the first to row across the Atlantic. Ninety-five years later no one has come close to their record time. As to why they did it, Harbo's unsentimental answer was brief: "To set a record and make money." In doing so, they conferred glory on both their native land and their adopted America. By "finishing the task" they bestowed honor upon themselves and their families.



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Although the enticing little island was in plain view and not very far offshore, it seemed more fun to do things properly. Which we did. First we took our departure from a big white rock abeam to port. Next we duly noted the time, and then we finally settled down on the course we had planned. However, it was only a few paddle strokes out into the sound when we became too busy to play "navigators". The wind got much stronger, little white caps appeared and our tiny ship started rising and falling in a real ocean going manner. This, of course, added just the right flavor to our mood of adventure and exploration. Casual onlookers might have noticed only an elderly couple out fooling around in a yellow blow-up boat. None would have guessed their spirit of nautical daring impelled by their imaginations.

Years ago both of us had read with great delight the thrilling story of Ginger and Dana Lamb, young newlyweds who, in the years of the Great Depression, had paddled and sailed their "Vagabunda", a 16' kayak/canoe they had built themselves, from San Diego down the coast of Mexico clear to the Panama Canal. Their book, "Enchanted Vagabonds" recounts many exciting experiences that befell them, and for us their story has remained a kind of super-fantasy upon which we sometimes model our own much more modest excursions.

Anyway, today's voyage could be viewed as being in their honor, for we too were enjoying that serene feeling of independence and self-sufficient well-being which they exemplified. If we faced negligible peril, no matter. In our cargo hold under the stern deck and secure in a plastic trash bag was all we needed. It contained our lunch, a thermos of hot coffee and a spare jacket apiece. Other items we must either wear or carry in the pockets of our life jackets, for the forward hold is barely large enough for the mate's legs. "Puddlebote", as we call our ship (which is really an 11' Sevylor Tahiti inflatable kayak) is a very compact ship indeed.

With the increasing breeze, "Puddlebote" started exhibiting her usual heavy weather tracking problems. She is too light and high-sided to perform well in gusty winds and it took vigorous paddle work by my wife Ce, who is #1 paddler, and a former girl's P.E. teacher, to keep us somewhat on course. I helped too, and after a big effort we finally grounded out on our island's warm, sandy beach. Once ashore, we effortlessly lifted "Puddlebote" to a high and safe perch. She weighs less than 25 pounds and Ginger and Dana would likely have envied this operation.



## Low Pressure Vagabonds

They recount many heroic struggles landing "Vagabunda", which weighed a hefty 150 pounds and carried considerable gear and provisions as well.

Today, just as we had hoped, no one else was on our island. It was easy to pretend we were the first visitors even as we followed an obviously well-worn path which led to a wonderful lookout spot. It was the sort of spot that every island should have. Here we had our lunch, and sitting on moderately soft rocks, enjoyed a view of the gorgeous blue water, other nearby islands, and the trees bending gracefully to the strong, salt-laden wind. Even a motorboat droning along offshore didn't penetrate this tranquility. It was a keen place, and we were really not sorry that others very likely had discovered it before us and had been just as enchanted as we were.

As we sat there, we fell to chatting about some of the other nice places we have visited in our last 42 years of sailing and camping together. While none of these equalled in glamour those visited by the Lambs, they were quite wonderful for us. One of the best things about cruising about in small craft is the package of memories you get to keep to enjoy in later years.

Later years also bring changes. Today we continue to find inexpensive fun touring and camping in lovely parts of the U.S. and Canada. Our travelling home, however, is now a little camper shell about the size of a pup tent which rides atop an ordinary little mini-truck. Like the Lambs, we can only take along the basic essentials. At first we thought having a boat was out of the question. Then we acquired "Puddlebote" and she solved our problem. Her most lovable feature is her ability to shrink in size. Even the paddles come apart, and by storing her outside when we use the camper shell for shelter, we manage her

transport with little real inconvenience. "Puddlebote" is as close to an imaginary boat as you can get, but having her along has enhanced our enjoyment immeasurably.

This virtue of being able to nearly disappear on command also came in handy as, when on an Oregon lake, we were suddenly beset by a fearsome headwind. We were then inspired to simply run ashore. There we deflated our ship, rolled her into the same trash bag that had carried our lunch, and toted her home overland. Few boaters enjoy such an option, and in this case, the Oregon Park Department had even provided a paved path.

People have said, "All that sounds fine, but what if you got punctured out in the middle of the bay?" Of course we always wear life jackets, but we've also discovered that it is not a case of "pop" and down you go. First of all, there are three main separate air chambers, plus two small inflated deck coamings, and the inflated seats with two compartments each. Even more reassuring is the fact that most punctures produce a very slow leak due to the relatively low air pressure involved. Once we paddled several miles after experiencing a puncture in the large starboard chamber (probably from an unnoticed nail at a dock). We were a bit apprehensive but we arrived safe and sound exhibiting only a mild starboard list and a kind of limp looking starboard gunwale. We might have gone on for miles without danger. The hole was easily patched.

Back to today's little voyage, it came time for us to leave, so we stowed everything we had brought back into the cargo hold and prepared to get underway. This consisted mostly of sitting down in the ship and pushing off from the beach. But the wind caused another of "Puddlebote's" contrary moods until we rounded the island's southern cape, thus putting the breeze astern. This is our ship's

best slant and she rode like a cork, or maybe more like an air mattress, flexing a bit with the waves and feeling stable and very cushy to sit in. With inflated seats there are no hard corners anywhere to cause discomfort and it is difficult to imagine a nicer way to drift down a tranquil stream or ride waves going the same way you are. Paddling back the other way is, of course, another matter.

We find that the endings of our voyages bring us a special kind of pleasure. One gets a nice sense of accomplishment and safety achieved. Sometimes we arrive wet, tired, maybe even cold, usually hungry, and the jetty light winking close at hand is indescribably reassuring and comforting. This evening was not yet dark and there was neither jetty nor light, but our hearts were equally gladdened by the bright windows of the little coffee shop on the side of the highway. The Lambs carried fishhooks to trade with the local people they met. We carry travelers' checks for the same purpose, and this seemed an excellent time for a trade.

This transaction resulted in hot coffee, luscious hamburgers and two pieces of the tastiest berry pie we had ever encountered. We sat there purring, looking out the window at our ship resting on the lawn, and decided that perhaps Ginger and Dana might have considered our little voyage today to be pretty tame. Maybe so, but one thing for sure, they would most certainly have loved that berry pie!

Bill Newcomb

**"PUDDLEBOTE'S" SPECIFICATIONS:**  
Manufacturer. Sevylor  
Model. Tahiti Kayak-Canoe  
Size. 10'8" x 2'8", Capacity 360  
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Weight. 23 lbs.  
Cost \$100 to \$150.

**ABOUT "ENCHANTED VAGABONDS"**  
Author. Dana Lamb.  
Publisher. Harper & Brothers,  
NY, 1938.

**ED NOTE:** I have been reading this book, obtained through my local library, and it is in the tradition of those old time melodramatic Saturday afternoon matinee films where the intrepid hero and heroine face challenge after challenge entirely on their own without outside help, and always seem to scrape through, often badly damaged, but never defeated. As a journal of an actual adventure, it nevertheless seems to have been significantly dramatized, perhaps as a bit of "escapist" reading for those grim gray times. It's a lark to read, even if at times somewhat unbelievable in its Jack Armstrong ambiance.

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## *The Brown Fleet of Spakenburg*

When it became clear that I would be going to a conference in Münster, Germany, in May, I decided to do something related to the boating scene thereabouts to compensate for the time I would miss sailing my little canoe yawl on Fishers Island Sound. A map informed me that the nearest international airport to Münster was Amsterdam. Images of high skies and enormous, puffy clouds, elegant, slender townhouses overlooking canals, and fleets of chunky botters tickled my fancy. A note to *Messing About in Boats* and a phone call to a contributor turned up a number of suggestions about things for a nautical enthusiast to do, the most fruitful of which was the idea of visiting Spakenburg, a fishing village about twenty-five miles from Amsterdam which harbors the largest surviving fleet of botters. While in Amsterdam, I strolled for miles along the canals and the waterfront, spending time visiting the Scheepvaart Museum as well as Werf 't Kromhout, a shipyard for small boats dating back to the 17th century. In Münster, after the conference, I trekked out to the canal port, and later rented a little sloop for about \$10.00 to sail on the

Aasee, a lake that was a five minute walk from my room. But most memorable were the two days I spent in the little village off the beaten track.

I got off the bus in Spakenburg at about noon on a Wednesday and found the VVV, the national tourist agency with offices just about everywhere in Holland. It was located where the main street of the village divides, forming a canal-like basin that harbors the fleet of botters on both banks. To my surprise the woman at the VVV spoke neither English nor German, and my ten words of Dutch and sign language had to suffice. I agreed to stay at a Pension two kilometers distant for \$18.00 a night, breakfast included, about half of what I had been paying for a tiny five-floor walk-up room in Amsterdam. When much to the surprise of the VVV agent, it turned out that I did not have a car, she called the pension and the proprietor, an amiable and talkative man in his sixties, drove in to pick me up.

On the way to the Pension De Poort in Bunschoten we worked out a system of communication, which involved a few words in Dutch and German but principally gestures and facial expressions. His ami-

ability was a harbinger of the treatment I received from the villagers I was later to meet. When I stowed my gear and indicated I was going to walk back to Spakenburg, the innkeeper led me to an outbuilding and offered me the loan of a bicycle!

Though it rained on and off--mostly on--for two days I managed to check out the famous "brown fleet" of botters, the old boat basin, and the modern marinas on forays from the village tavern where I established a sort of headquarters. The fleet is maintained by an organization of owners and enthusiasts who cover part of their expenses by chartering the botters, usually to groups, for about \$120 for half a day. I did manage to get aboard one of the boats whose skipper was tidying up, but the weather and the hefty tariff argued against going for a sail. On my jaunts to and from the pension, I took in the village's mini-museums, which featured model boats, folk costumes, and exhibits illustrating village trades and crafts of yore.

A characteristic Dutch brag asserts that though God may have made the rest of the world, the Dutch themselves

created Holland. The considerable amount of their territory reclaimed from the sea was accomplished at a cost, however, and not just in terms of money. Spakenburg, once a thriving herring fishery on an estuary open to the sea, now finds itself inland, some ten miles up an artificial river formed by the Flevoland polder. The estuary itself, the Zuiderzee, now called the IJsselmeer, was converted to a fresh-water lake with the completion of the 32 kilometer Enclosing Dam in 1932. Much of the fishing industry has of course given way to yachting and messing about in boats. The accompanying pictures illustrate nautical aspects of my sojourn, but I cannot resist spinning a yarn about the friendly and inquisitive people of Spakenburg.

The second time I entered the tavern I was treated as if I had been coming there for ten years. I was included in the rounds of drinks the regular customers were ordering, and I found myself talking with Dennis from Surinam, whose English was pretty good. When he learned I was headed for Münster, Dennis introduced me to Edwin, who was going there by car with two friends the following day. I was invited to come along with them. I was also invited to or told not to miss the party that night for Christine, the animated, pleasant-spoken, convivial barmaid, who would turn 18 at midnight. I had taken her to be about 25.

When I bought some postcards before heading down to the Oude Schans to take photographs, it was clear the clerk knew who I was and where I was staying. Later that night, in the tavern, everyone had to offer a toast to Christine and dance with her--including me. As Dennis said, "Everyone in this town knows everyone else."

"Everyone in this town seems to know me too," I added, and explained. "I told the people at the Pension that I was leaving today, but I changed my mind when the sun came out. I had dinner tonight at the Petersheim, the place you suggested, and I bet you couldn't guess what the waitress said when I walked in--I'd never been there before, of course. She said, 'Oh, it's you. We thought you left this afternoon!'"

Jim Lacey



Opposite page top: Main street in Spakenburg. Above from the top: Downtown Amsterdam has a working waterfront. Amsterdam's Werf 'd Kromhout with a repair job underway. The old shipyard in Spakenburg still works on the botters. A collection of model ships in the museum in Spakenburg.

# A CANOE TRIMARAN

Bob Cummings of Secret Harbor Boatworks in northern California sent us this nice layout all set to run about his unique sailing canoe trimaran, and we couldn't resist. Innovation is alive and well in small boating.

A CANOE TRIMARAN IS A CROSS BETWEEN A CANOE AND A BEACH CAT. When there is wind it can sail with the mastery expected of a modern multihull. When there is no wind it can be paddled with pleasure, being designed from the start for human power. When the trip is over it can be portaged and cartopped and stored in a small space.



THE CREW MOVES AROUND A LOT. They sit forward to paddle, come back to the crossarm to sail, and move out over a float to sail fast. There are good handholds out there, a rope on both sides like a playground swing, and good footholds, too. The crossarm is padded all the way across.



THE CAPTAIN'S SEAT IS LIKE THE PILOT'S SEAT IN A SMALL PLANE. Pushing on the rudder pedals with your feet pushes you firmly against the seat-back for a very secure feeling. All the sail controls lead to this seat and a paddle is stowed just behind it. We think that to sit facing forward with both hands free to handle sheets is an improvement on the customary position.



FROM THE BEACH CAT COMES A GREAT SAIL RIG, including rotating mast, fully battened mainsail, and wide traveler. Over half a million of these rigs are out sailing, many of them over 20 years old. They move right along in barely detectable light airs and still have solid control in the strongest gusts.

The beach cat also has A NICE SPACIOUS FEELING, and so does this trimaran which is 19' x 14'. Three people can sit in seats with backs and two more lie stretched out, and no one need be in arm's length of another.

SOMETIMES THERE IS NO WIND AT ALL, so this boat is slender and light to be paddled a long way. The seats are set high so your feet can be comfortably low. The hull is especially slender near the seats so it is easy to reach the water at your side. A modern wood paddle is as light as a pair of running shoes and has a 15 degree bent shaft to be more efficient.



THIS BOAT WILL PORTAGE LIKE A CANOE. The main hull weighs 76 lbs. The floats nestle into the curves of the crossarm and this slim package weighs 74 lbs. Both are set up for one or two-man portage, which is a practical solution to crowded parking problems. It also makes me dream of places that no one has sailed because only a trail goes there.



FROM CARTOP TO SAIL READY TAKES 15 MINUTES. We always seem to get on the water quicker than sailboarders; they are left on the beach complaining of how gusty it is. One strong person can easily set it up alone and sail it alone in moderate wind, but this is really a tandem boat. It is not for the ME generation. Construction is of clear fiberglass over a perfect redwood core. It is beautiful, but durable enough with its "shoe" keel to drag over rocks when necessary, even with a full load of camping gear. It is a long story. If you would like to hear more, please write us for study plans, which are \$10.



IT'S A GOOD DIVE BOAT. That is our opinion after many years of diving on our rough Mendocino coast. All the clutter of gear is secure enough down in the canoe yet is easily reached from the crossarm. Four people can paddle at the same time so there is power to dare some wild spots. Even a very tired diver can always be sure of getting back on board because the crossarm becomes a ramp when his weight submerges a float.



THIS TRIMARAN FOLDS INTO AN AERODYNAMIC CARTOP LOAD. On a 3,000 mile trip to the Sea of Cortez, our Subaru wagon got its rated country mpg (30) at 60 mph. The load felt steady and sure even when meeting the blast of oncoming trucks on narrow roads. Maybe it looks like the Space Shuttle on its 747, but we have found this an advantage in traffic - people slow down to look.

# Boats and Marriage

July 13, 1984. A day I will always remember! My soon-to-be mother-in-law quietly took me aside and gave me this sage piece of advice: "If you ever want anything done around the house, it had better be before the boats go into the water, because once that happens, nothing gets done except boating." I silently chuckled to myself knowing that my life would be different than hers. Was I ever wrong!

Her husband fished and boated with total abandon in the summer and only read about his hobby in the winter months. Little did I know that my husband was cut from the same cloth. The only difference was that he would move the boat inside the garage after the summer season was over. That way it could be part of our life for the complete year.

The following are two lists of rules I have devised to help a married couple keep its sanity when one is obsessed with boats:

## A GOOD HUSBAND...

Will not bring boards into the living room to varnish the night before Thanksgiving.

Will not stop at every boat he sees that looks like it might be for sale.

Will not take his wife to used boatyards as scenic side trips on their honeymoon.

Will offer to do the sanding, which his wife hates to do.

Will visit for at least one hour with his in-laws who just arrived after a 400 mile trip, even though there are only three boards left to sand.

Will order roses for his wife at the same time he orders another \$100 worth of bronze screws for the boat.

Will leave the garage and the "project" alone on a few important dates like Christmas and family birthdays.

Will wipe the snow off his wife's car in the morning, since the boat and its various parts now take up all the room in the garage.

Will have a fire in the fireplace on their anniversary even though he is running low on wood for the garage stove.

Will take his wife for lots of boat rides.

## A GOOD WIFE...

Will give her husband the new sander three weeks before Christmas just because it will make his life easier.

Will spend hours calling to

find out if a "widget" is available anywhere on the east coast, and not mind the phone bill when it comes in.

Will be gracious and hold up supper until after dark.

Will nod her head and make appropriate sounds when her husband tells her for the hundredth time how the garage needs to be expanded in order to accommodate the larger boat that he wants to restore.

Will take coffee out to the garage at 9 (both a.m. and p.m.).

Will plan all vacations to coordinate with the current project.

Will offer to help (without laughing).

Will have the upholstery in the boat recovered instead of having the couch done.

Will keep a picture of her husband on the kitchen table so the children will remember what daddy looks like without sawdust all over him.

Will go for lots of boat rides with her husband.

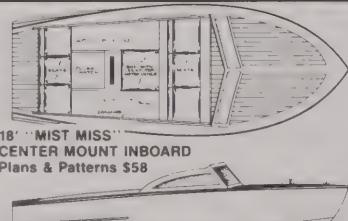
Needless to say, Rule #10 on both lists is the most important one. Happy boating!

Margaret Barclay, Niagara Falls, NY.



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## Flight of the "Damn Foole" ~3

There was no wind that early in the morning, so I resignedly set the oars in the oarlocks and rowed through the fog for "My Rock N'2". I never saw it. Found myself between Phantom Rk. and Stam-ma-store Island when the fog lifted briefly. We sailed between Lumpkin Island and Outer Huron without seeing them either. When the fog lifted, White Island was to port.

"This island is where Wright built a house," I explained to the boat. "Cut all the trees down to make an ugly little box on the very top of the rock. There he contentedly resides with a growing pile of trash beside it. Technology sends man into outer space while we live in ugly little wooden boxes. Wright's house represents the dangling end of the evolution of construction. Which has only been concerned with appearance. Could the house have generated its own power, reused its own refuse, been more self-contained, independent, been less conspicuous? Doubtful. It stands atop the rock as an example of New England practically like an accumulation of bird droppings."



WRIGHT HOUSE

"Another profound statement from a do-nothing," the boat reminded me.

Strumpcaps Island to port. Crossing Horns Bay. Arriving at Grim-a-Mid Point, down Grim-a-Hid Neck to Grim-a-Lid River, avoiding the supernumery Lobster Buoys. We sailed to the public dock against a fast outgoing tide. I should have botched it but we came about smartly and tied up. Fishermen stood along the dock with their lines dangling idly in the water. The boat and I fell under the condemnation of these idlers.

"What the hell kind of a boat is that?" one asked.

"Look what he did to the hull," another said.

"Got to be crazy to sail outside a harbor in that."

"I think the green sails are pretty," a woman said, making matters worse.

"How's fishing?" I asked to change the subject.

"Nobody's caught a damn thing," one fisherman told me, "and nobody's had a bite all week."

"Why do you bother then?" I asked him.

"Part of our nature I guess. Can't help ourselves," he replied.

Fishing for survival has evolved into the art of doing nothing.

leaving us on the mud. I couldn't get ashore because the mud was too deep. "Nothing ashore anyway," I told myself.



"Where can I get a mooring?" I asked the harbormaster.

"There are none," was the laconic answer. "Anchor up the river," he told me.

The river current had gotten stronger and the wind weaker, so we stayed tied to the dock for a few hours. I wandered about to find everything was closed. The restaurant. The museum. Even the outdoor bathrooms.

"The State of Maine is shut down," I was told, "because of lack of funds."



In time the current eased up enough for us to row up river near the shore to a cove. We anchored in shallow water. The tide ebbed

So I cooked beans and watched the terns fishing. Efficient little devils. Each time they dove they got a fish, they never missed. They were better fishermen than those triumphs of evolution on the dock with all their equipment.

The boat floated during the night. I awoke at sunrise and looked over the side. There was two feet of water to the bottom. So I went back to sleep. When I awoke again we were sitting on the mud. "You should have gotten into deeper water at sunrise, you donkey," the boat said. Now we had to wait for the return of the tide.

Luckily the wind picked up when the tide refloated us. I cast off at 9:00 and we slowly sailed the shore against the current. Crossing Miss Congus Bay a wasp came aboard. "Go forward where you belong," I commanded it. It stayed on my knee defiantly. "You know the penalty for refusing to obey an order at sea," I informed it. It ignored me. "Well, you're not going to ruin a good day by making me act objectionably," I said, and put him on a book and set him in the bow to act as lookout.

A seal followed us. "You spying on us?" I asked.



"Just checking on what you're going to do."

"We're not going to do anything, we're just passing through."

"Everybody does something to foul up this area, then they complain that everything else is ruining it for them."

"We're just sailing through, complaining."

"Well, if you do, you're the exception." He continued following us like a cantankerous old wharfinger.

Old Harbor Sunken Ledge Buoy. Little Legg Rox. Eastern Legg Rox. Legg Rox North Ledge. Legg Rox South Ledge. Legg Rox Shoals. Larger boats stayed well offshore outside the navigational aids, while we could stay close to shore and enjoy the passing scenery.



This leads into praising the local boat builder. The Townie is built in Newbury, Massachusetts, not in China. It is a family owned business, not an international conglomerate. You can actually speak directly to the builder, not to an assistant manager or a recording machine. The boat is designed to be sailed in these waters, not the Pacific, or the Caribbean, or the coasts of Europe. It's made of native woods, not imported exotic materials. The sails and parts can be gotten locally. Not from California, Australia or Japan. If damaged it can be easily repaired. It is a safe, comfortable boat and not a damn racing machine. It'll even talk to you if you take the time to listen.

Old Tramp Ledge. Wompson's Island. Save-Us Island. Grinnen Island. Scupper Island. The low grey sky darkened to the N. and N.W.

"How does that poem go?" I asked the boat. "Rain before wind...something happens; and wind before rain...something else happens?"

"I'm supposed to remember poems?" the boat complained. "Wait and see what the weather does." The weather held steady and didn't do anything, leaving me unenlightened.

I put on another pair of pants, another shirt, two sweaters and foul weather gear, another hat and a towel around my neck. I still

couldn't conserve what little body heat I generated. I think as we grow older we start becoming cold blooded animals.



### PORT GLYDE

Entering Port Slide we tied up to the dock to the left of the main pier. I was told that there would be plenty of free moorings in this harbor. I found 15 or 20 red buoys



at \$10 a night. Times were a changing and Maine, when it wasn't shut down, was changing along

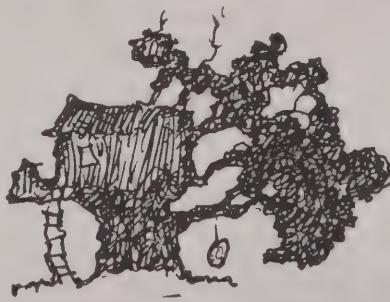


with them. Ashore I walked around frantically trying to see something of interest. There was only an old fishing trawler converted to take passengers to Monhegan. So I sat among the local do-nothings and watched the boat take on and discharge its daily catch of tourists.

We anchored, and in the morning breakfasted with the other migrants at the old Ocean Hotel.



From the window I could see a tree house kids had built. The tree should have been more considerate and grown into a house instead of a silly tree. We cleared the harbor



### TREE HOUSE

by 8:00 a.m., sailing between Mosquito Head and Mosquito Island and



speeding by. Caught what they wanted and had to get back. Forever in a hurry. Can't go fast enough. I thought of going into Venalhaven but the weather held steady with plenty of light left so we continued on to Moore's Ledge, Wreck Rock, Harbor Point Head.



### 11 SPORTSMAN HUNTING

rounding One, Two and Three Bush Islands. Eleven sports fishing



boats raced by headed south. Hunting. All wild things are hunted; the fish, the fowl, the animals of the forests. Trapped, shot and poisoned, for fun and profit; pursued every moment of their miserable lives. A price tag on every living thing, and if it can't be killed for profit then it's killed for the sheer joy of it. Like we were given divine instructions to kill every damn living thing we can.

"Does that say something about you?" the boat asked. I couldn't reply and wondered if we had even one redeeming quality. Intelligence?

The wind lightened. Other sailboats closer to the land seemed to be moving better. I remembered that the sun heats up the land and the air rises above it and the colder sea air rushes in to fill the void, creating a sea breeze near the land. We should have stayed closer to shore.

We crossed the West Wenobshott, passing Little Green Island, Large, Larger, Great, Greater, Greatest, etc. Green Islands. Ought-To Island. Brimstone, Saddleback, Brandies. Three of the eleven sportfishermen returned,



### RETURNING

By now things changed. The wind headed us. We were forced to tack against an outgoing tide. I should have waited for the tide to change, but that would have been too reasonable. So we sailed and rowed and grumbled until we approached the public dock on the Isle of Woe. It was crowded with people fishing.

"Can't they do nothing somewhere else?" I asked, suddenly becoming aware of how outlandishly over-decorated the boat looked. "I'm embarrassed," I explained to the boat.

"You're embarrassed!" the boat screamed at me. "You let your silly instincts run amuck and then I have to live with the results."

"We'll sail by. I don't want to have to explain you to those people on the dock."

"A fine state of affairs. I'd like to explain YOU to them," the boat replied. As we sailed by the fishermen's heads turned and then their mouths dropped open. They pulled their lines in and left. They had lost their concentration, and fishing for nothing takes concentration.

I spotted a private dock a short distance away. We tacked for it and hit bottom. I pulled the centerboard up a little and continued heading for it. We grounded out completely at the dock with the centerboard up and the rudder out. If the weather got bad we'd be pounded to pieces on the rocky bottom. The situation got worse. The boom and sail snarled on the pilings and the wind pinned us to the dock. I dropped the sails and rowed off, only to run up on more rocks. A sightseeing boat passed us with its gawking passengers. The captain's head popped out of the pilot-house window explaining us away as an example of poor navigation.



The boat and I swore and argued at one another until the wake of the sightseeing boat freed us. Now the boat wouldn't head into the wind when I rowed, so I let the bow fall off completely and rowed the damn thing backwards.

Only one fisherman remained at the dock to greet us. "Never saw a sailboat rowed backwards," he said.

"Sails forward, rows backward," I explained. "How's fish-

ing?" I asked to keep communication alive.



### BACKWARDS

"Not catching a damn thing," he replied as I expected.

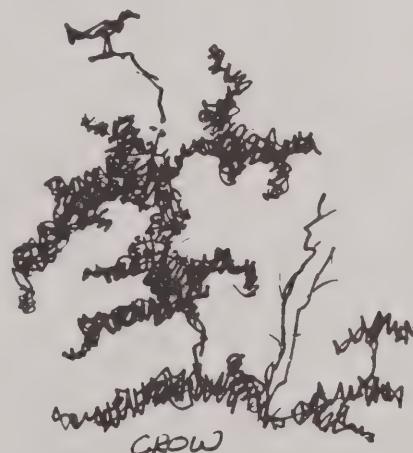
"Anything of interest to see on the island?" I asked.

"If you go up that road and turn right there's nothing to see for miles. But if you go to the left there's the church, post office, town hall, court, store and the library." He pointed out a mooring I could hang on for the night. I walked up to the road and turned left. In a short time I came upon a small stone building that housed the church, the post office, the town hall, the court, the store and the library. It was closed.

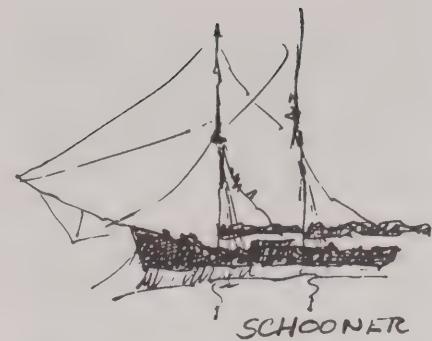


### STONE HOUSE

The rest of the time I watched a crow in a treetop. I doubt if he realized how important he was at that moment. He was observed and thought about, the focus of attention to the exclusion of everything else. What a distortion of reality. I'm sure if he had been aware of the attention he was getting he would have hammed it up with a few jokes and a little soft shoe. Crows are like that.



I returned to the boat and rowed out to the mooring. Two schooners soon came in and dropped anchor, rowing their passengers ashore so they could stare in wonder at the island's small, efficient stone building.



A good night's sleep and oatmeal in the morning sent us on our way to Yawns Island.

(To Be Continued)

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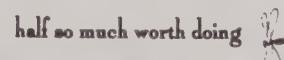


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During the summer months Barnegat Bay, New Jersey, is the destination of thousands of hopeful blue claw crabbers. Many find their way to Dick's Landing in Bayville, certainly one of the more popular rowboat liveries.

Two events bear telling in this story. The first is that we've built our retirement home on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The area is a small boat owner's paradise with the Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay within a few miles of each other. So naturally I began thinking about a boat.

The second is that I noticed a small sign on one of the sheds at Dick's Landing. This was as we were loading our bushel of crabs into the car trunk one day this past summer. It said, simply, "Custom Rowboats, Rich Baumgardt". Well, I had just spent several hours in one of those "custom rowboats" and had been so doing for many years without ever giving it a second thought.

On the way to the ice machine I stopped one of the yard men and asked where I could find Mr. Baumgardt. "Right over there," he said, pointing to a man working on an outboard motor.

I walked over, introduced myself, and said I was interested in finding out more about rowboats. We spoke briefly. I got some idea of cost. He handed me his card and said, "Come back in December, I don't build 'em now anyway, too busy." That I could believe.

The next time I saw Rich, snow and ice had replaced the crab traps and greenheads. He showed me a boat he had just completed. It was sanded but not yet primed. The rivets shone brightly. The silicon bronze nail heads could be seen. It was totally unlike the battered, abused boats, all painted a bilious green inside and out, that one was used to seeing in the rental fleet. Yet it was identical.

We discussed many options that day and finally wrote up an agreement. By the end of our talk Rich sensed that I very much wanted to be involved in the building. He offered to precut most of the pieces so that when I and one of my sons came down we could concentrate on the assembly and fastening. As an afterthought, he added, "but, that's how I do it anyway."

We kept in touch during the next couple of months. March 3rd found my youngest son, Alex, and I on the shore of Barnegat Bay. The stem was clamped in place and the two scarfed hull panels were positioned on the jig. There was no ceremony as the work began, although I felt it would have been appropriate. A bead of caulking was run along the stem cutout for the side panels. The silicon bronze ringnails had already been started



## Building a Barnegat Bay Rowboat

in the panels. The panels were then lined up with predrawn marks and the nails driven home.

. The Jig - Rich remembers: "I've had this jig about eleven years. Before that it belonged to Ed Hibberd. In the spring of '79 I built seventeen boats with Ed. I guess that was my apprenticeship. The next year I brought the jig down here from Bricktown. Ed began building with his father when he was fourteen. Ed's father built this jig. It was originally used for cedar planked rowboats but plywood changed that after World War II. Exactly when Ed's father built the jig we don't know, but it was probably during the 1920's or early 1930's."

The sides were bent into position and fastened to the transom. The transom had been clamped onto the jig. The ring nails were staggered and driven at angles into the 1-1/2" Harborite to prevent splitting. The pre-bent chines were next fitted into place with a high quality, two-part marine epoxy. The chines were clamped at many points along their lengths. Holes were drilled in a staggered pattern and copper nails were driven through sides and chines to the inside of the boat. With a five pound dolly against the hull and a hammer, each nail was clenched over.

"Now, this is important," Rich said, "each nail must be started at the bottom right against the chine. If you start the bend higher it could force a little dogleg back into the wood. That's also why I never drive a nail that's bent or isn't started perfectly. You see, as the boat works, those little doglegs will straighten out, and guess what, you get a separation of the seam." This same theme was repeated throughout the construction, and the dolly was never far from the work.

The bottom seams were caulked and anchorfast nails were driven into the chines, transom and stem every two inches, again in stag-

gered rows and at angles. While the boat was still upside down the three 1"x2" oak keels were positioned and drilled. A copper rivet was driven into each hole through the bottom of the hull. The hull was lifted by Rich and Mathew, our sixteen year old, and turned over onto two short sawhorses. Copper washers were placed over each rivet and set with a simple punch. The rivets were nipped off about a washer's thickness above the washer.

"Now comes the fun part," Rich said to Mathew. He was instructed to lie on a mechanic's creeper and hold the dolly tight up against each rivet in turn while Rich peened it with an air hammer. When a rivet was done Rich would shout, "next", Mathew would reposition himself and shout "ready". If Matt was not ready he would shout "stop". "Don't yell no," Rich said, because no sounds like go. A fellow yelled that once and I went right through the bottom." All the yelling and shouting was necessary because in that small shop we all wore industrial earmuffs to protect against the noise of the riveting.

The ribs: A premarked spline and a notched plywood template appeared. Rich lay the spline atop the chine and transferred its numbered marks to the sides using a template. The pre-cut ribs of white oak were clamped into place at each station. Three holes were drilled through each rib and copper rivets secured them to the sides and chine. The bottom of each rib did not meet the top of the chine, although by an extension it was fastened to the chine on the side and met the floor. This cutout provided a generous limber hole through each rib. When I questioned Rich about the size of each hole he replied, "Bail, guts, bunker hunks, seaweed, mud, salami sandwiches, you know. Bring her in, hose her down, and she won't stink."

As with the keels, as each rivet was snipped off the waste was

tossed into the copper can. After several boats a coffee can full of copper scrap could be sold to a scrap metal dealer. "Buys my beer," Rich said.

The seat clamps went in next. They were fastened across each rib with ring nails. The four seats were set in place and fastened to the seat clamps with stainless steel flat-head wood screws. The seats themselves were cut from 1-1/2" poplar planks. Of poplar, Rich said, "It's strong, clear, splinter-free and economical. Think about a seat; strong, clear and economical are nice, but splinter-free is wonderful."

The seat braces were measured and cut after the seats were in place. They were made of the same 1-1/2" Harborite that formed the transom. The tolerances are very close and they must be "convinced" into place. The braces were fastened through the seats with ring nails, but were not fastened through the bottom. Oarlock pads and gunwale blocks were clamped into place. The gunwales were fitted, clamped, and nailed through from stem to stern. Finally, the inwales were clamped and similarly fastened. A powerplane was used then to shape the entire sheer.

Rich's thoughts on fiberglass were: "Had a fellow come down here once, he was an engineer. He wanted me to build him a rowboat out of fiberglass. You know, you can always tell an engineer, but you can't tell 'em much. You can't

make a good rowboat out of fiberglass. It will either be too heavy or too weak."

A transom knee had been laminated from the hull panel scrap while we were installing the chines. It was now fastened through the bottom and transom with 5/16" galvanized bolts. This reinforcement was for our planned use of a 15 horsepower motor instead of the 10 horsepower normally used. From the beginning it had been decided that we would use a long shaft motor. Therefore there was just a shallow cutout in the transom. "That extra 5" can be a real comfort in a chop," Rich said. Baymen in this part of the world talk about rough water as a chop and not as a sea.

The woodwork had now been completed. Sanding commenced and machines were used wherever possible. There remained many places where small blocks or just plain fingers were called for. As a writ-

er, I find sanding difficult to glamorize. As a craftsman I recognize its necessity but it is tedious.

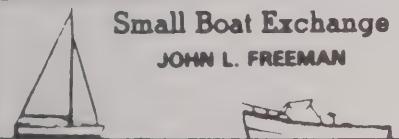
When I noticed that the bottom edges of the sides protruded about 1/8" below the bottom all around I asked Rich when he was going to plane it flush. "I ain't," he replied, "it's like the sole of a shoe, it sticks out a little from the uppers, that protects the seam. That edge takes a lot of wear and tear. Over the years it will get ground down. That's your biggest problem, why start the process now?"

It is now mid-summer again. The little black skiff has drawn several casual compliments. Mathew and Alex have mastered the intricacies of the tidal creeks that lead to the inlet and the big water outside the barrier islands. On days when the surf's up, the little black skiff may be the only thing out there on the water.

Richard D'Ambrosio



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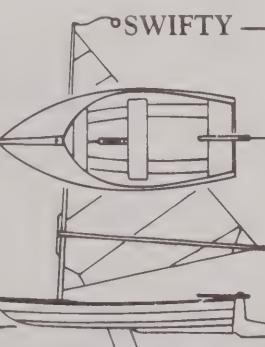
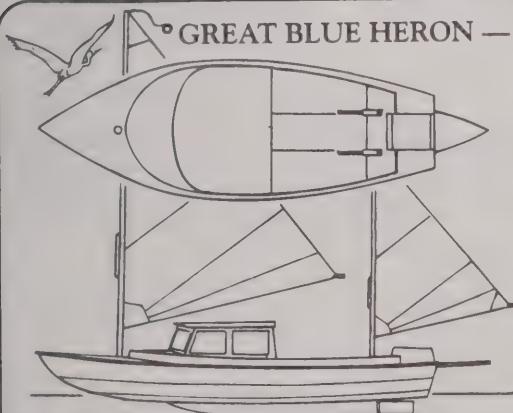
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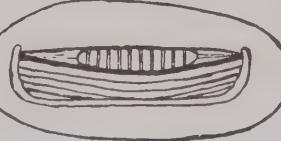
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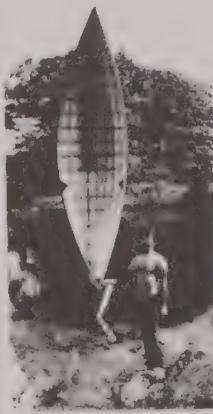
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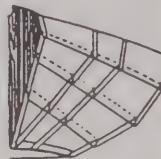
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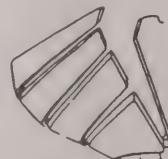
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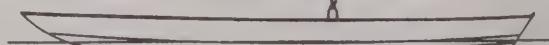
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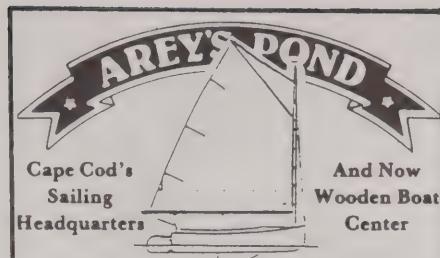
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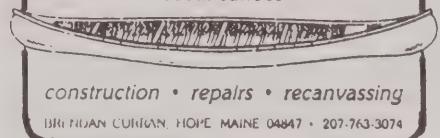
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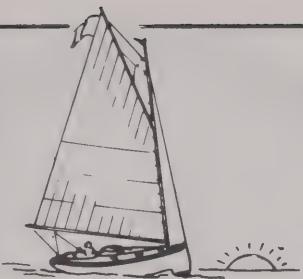
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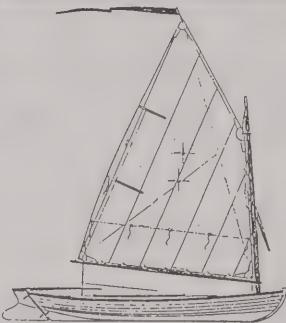
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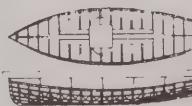
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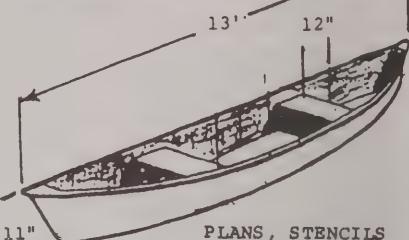
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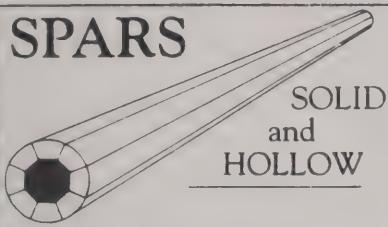
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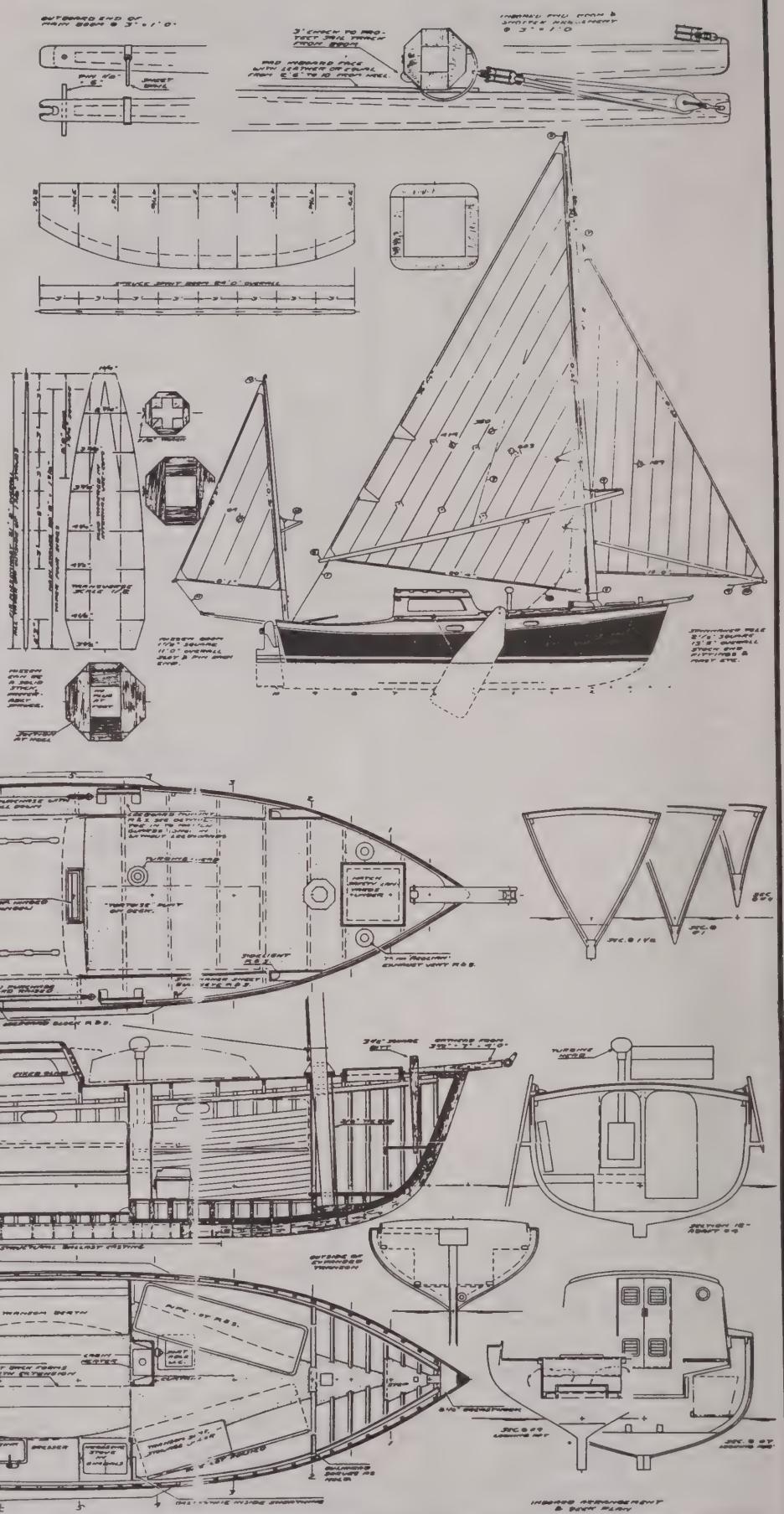
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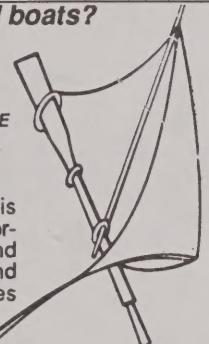
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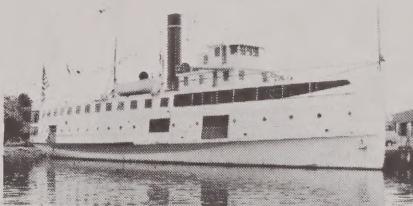
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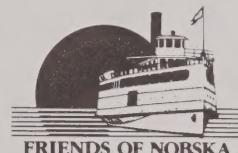
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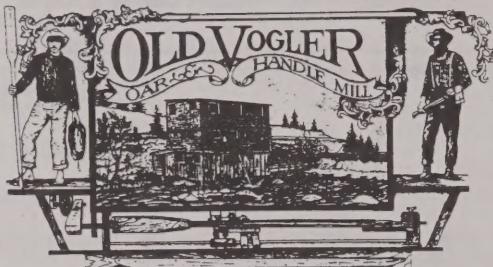


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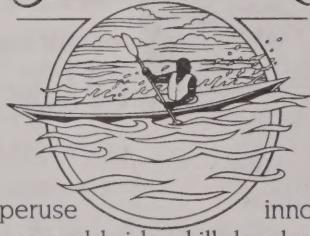
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